

Brown disappointed with 175-yard day



Robin Trimarchi/Daily Nebraskan

Nebraska I-back Derek Brown looks for running room, pursued by Utah State tackle Jed DeVries during Saturday's game. Brown finished the game with 175 yards on 23 carries.

By Todd Cooper
Senior Reporter

Blame it on the rain. It might as well be the rain, since I-back Derek Brown couldn't give a reason for being disappointed with his 175 yards on 23 carries Saturday. The output was the third-best opening day performance in Husker football history.

"For some reason, I didn't feel like myself out there," Brown said. "There's a lot of room for improvement."

Utah State defenders might find that hard to believe, after Brown had runs of 17, 13 (three times), nine, six (twice) and five (twice) yards, all up the middle.

But Brown, who said he's used to running outside, complimented the offensive line for those bursts through the middle.

"The offensive line blocked really well today," Brown said. "There were a lot of holes for us."

Brown did take some credit, though, admitting that he had worked on running inside, to match his elusive style.

"I feel stronger and more confident running the middle," Brown said. "I worked hard on my strength this summer, and that made a difference."

"In the past I didn't like it as much, but now I'm not too worried about getting knocked back."

Brown said he would have liked to turn the corner just once Saturday.

"It would have been nice (to go outside)," Brown said. "I was looking to score every time, but I was just going with what I got."

Brown said he didn't expect to enter the game until "about three or four series later." Starter Scott Baldwin sprained his ankle in the first quarter after a 29-yard touchdown

rump, triggering the 59-28 win over Utah State.

When fall camp began, Brown thought he'd be entering games a lot sooner. He lost his starting spot to Baldwin after Nebraska's first scrimmage this fall.

"It was something you've got to deal with," Brown said. "I had a decent fall camp. I didn't feel I played all that great. Scotty played really well."

As did Calvin Jones, according to Nebraska Coach Tom Osborne. The redshirt freshman from Omaha Central gained 81 yards on 14 carries Saturday.

And Jones may be able to blame any extra nerves on the rain. A downpour started when he entered the game midway through the third quarter.

"I hadn't been in a game situation like this in a year and a half or so," Jones said. "I was a little scared. I wanted to go in, but under those conditions I was a little too anxious."

"I was concentrating on taking care of the ball with all that rain," Jones said. "But then I started getting into a rhythm."

That pattering noise wasn't just from the rain. After losing four yards, Jones scampered for runs of 11 (twice), six, three and one yards. He accounted for 32 of the Huskers' 43 yards in the drive before increasing Nebraska's lead to 40-20 on a 3-yard touchdown.

Jones scored again on a 2-yard jaunt to cap Nebraska's next possession. He gained 34 of Nebraska's 81 yards in that drive, all up the middle.

Jones said there weren't too many people in his way.

"The fans are going to look at those stats and think we must have had bulldozers in front of us," Jones said. "The offensive line deserves the MVP of this game."

Cornhusker football fans may have seen new era

As I entered Memorial Stadium on Saturday, I was expecting to see the usual opening-game performance from the accustomed team that I have become accustomed to over the years.

For years now, I have come away from the first game with my mind dulled and my eyes glazed from watching those boring 70-0 blowouts against some team which wasn't exactly threatening to crack the Top 10.



Nick Hytrek

Everyone remembers those games: The Cornhuskers scoring on every possession, every other touchdown coming from at least 50 yards out, and no sign of Nebraska's punter. The only time the other team got the ball was when Nebraska was finished stuffing it into the end zone.

So as kickoff neared, I was full of anticipation. Not because I was expecting to see a good game, but because I was just ready to watch a Nebraska football game.

But walking out of the stadium after the game, my friends and I knew we had seen something special. Something out of the ordinary. In a way, we had witnessed Nebraska football history.

From the very start of the game, I could sense that this was not going to be a typical opener for many reasons.

First of all, Mickey Joseph threw the ball on Nebraska's first play.

"Was that a pass we just saw? On the first play of the game?" I asked my friend, who was equally as stunned as I was.

Yes, it was going to be a different game. Things had indeed changed.

Oh yeah, the pass was incomplete, showing that some things stay the same.

The game moved through the first quarter, without anything really exciting happening. The Huskers racked up 17 points, but there were no scoring plays of over 50 yards.

The second quarter brought a big surprise. Coach Osborne actually yanked Joseph out of the game and put in Keithen McCant. Now here was something I'd never seen before — Osborne replacing an ineffective quarterback with someone else before it was too late.

For once, I'd seen a quarterback change in the opener while the game was still undecided. And did the fans ever like what they saw. McCant made a statement with his play, showing he deserved the starting job.

Once halftime came, my friends and I were still sitting there, pondering what had been one of the most unusual first halves we had ever witnessed.

Fifteen passes by Nebraska in the first half alone, this had to be some kind of record. Joseph wasn't playing quarterback anymore.

Could it be that Osborne was finally buckling under fan pressure? Only the second half would provide that answer.

When the second half began, McCant was still the man under center, much to everyone's delight. You could sense it in the air. There would be more passing.

Unfortunately, there were also storm clouds in the air and, soon after, rain, lightning and a delayed game.

Once play resumed after 19 minutes and many belly slides by the students, Osborne had the perfect excuse to quit the aerial assault.

Osborne said after the game that, because of the wet field conditions, he elected to just grind out the rest of

See SURPRISE on 8

McCant to start at quarterback

By Chuck Green
Senior Editor

Keithen McCant did Saturday what he couldn't do in four years.

McCant, a senior quarterback from Grand Prairie, Texas, came into the game to replace floundering Cornhusker starter Mickey Joseph and impressed himself, his teammates and his coaches with his performance.

Before halftime, McCant had thrown his first varsity touchdown pass and scored his first rushing touchdown.

McCant will set another personal first this Saturday when he will be the Huskers' starting quarterback.

Nebraska coach Tom Osborne said Monday after practice that "barring something significant in practice" McCant will start against Colorado State.

He will be backed up by Joseph. Osborne said both players did well in the game, but McCant graded better in the Huskers' 59-28 win.

"To some degree you've got to go with performance," he said.

McCant completed 6 of 10 passes for 101 yards and a touchdown, and had run for 87 yards on nine carries. He also threw one interception.

McCant, however, seemed the least surprised of anyone by the game.

"I felt like I prepared myself by working out hard over the summer, conditioning and lifting," he said. "The only thing that bothered me was the interception I threw."

"I always envisioned that if I got a chance to come in, it was up to me to play well and keep the team going."

Osborne said he was impressed with McCant, since he had never played in a varsity game in which the score was still in doubt.

"He performed very well," Osborne said. "He made some good decisions out there and showed that he deserves to play."

Nebraska I-back Derek Brown agreed.

"I knew he could do it," Brown said. "It was just a matter of time. It was just like (former Nebraska quarterback and current assistant

coach Gerry) Gdowski. You never heard anything from him for three years, and then in his senior year, he was great.

The play McCant remembered best from the game was his 27-yard touchdown pass to tight end Johnny Mitchell in the second quarter.

As McCant rolled to the right, Utah State's defense flowed with him, leaving Mitchell covered by two defenders. Mitchell reversed his field, ran back to the left and toward the end zone, waving his arms.

McCant spotted him, stopped and threw back across the field for the score that put Nebraska ahead 24-7.

"I was just lucky I saw him," McCant said.

"Other than the interception, I feel like I did pretty well (in the first half)," he said. "I was really excited (about starting the second half). I just tried my best to keep myself in the game and do things right."

Men's basketball investigation complete

From Staff Reports

A stormy summer for the Nebraska men's basketball program came closer to an end Monday as University of Nebraska-Lincoln officials announced that the school's internal investigation of the program is over and the results have been forwarded to the NCAA.

The completion of the investigation came more than four months after Tony Farmer and Jose Ramos, both members of Nebraska's 1990-91 team, were declared ineligible because of violations of the NCAA's extra-benefit rule.

Al Papik, the University's assis-

stant athletic director and director for compliance, said a five-member panel concluded Friday that the investigation was complete.

"The investigation team found no wrongdoing on the part of the coaching staff," Papik said. "However, in accordance with the principals of institutional control, the university is responsible for the conduct of its student athletes."

Nebraska basketball coach Danny Nee said Monday's announcement was welcome, but not unexpected.

"We knew that we had this thing put to bed a long time ago," Nee said.

In April, the university declared Ramos and Farmer ineligible because

of improper car loans received from Raymond Peery, the former executive director of the Central Interstate Low-Level Radioactive Waste Compact.

Papik said this summer's investigation revealed more extra benefits received by Ramos and Farmer, but he would not specify what those benefits were.

In addition to penalizing Ramos and Farmer, UNL also leveled two distinct penalties on the program itself: A reduction of one basketball scholarship for the 1991-92 academic year, and a reduction of one official

See ACTIONS on 8